soul together. The worst famine we ever had to face was in 1918 and it was weathered by the brave and unselfish devotion of the Rev. H. and Mrs. Parsons, to whose work amongst the Miao, were this book larger, we could easily devote a chapter. Suffice it to say that in the annals of our Church their names should be recorded in letters of gold. It was during this famine that there was committed the only murder of which we ever knew a Miao to be guilty, and in this the pangs of hunger were the cause.

A young man out seeking food met an elderly man carrying a small bag of grain. They were near one of the many bottomless pits which are found upon these hills. No one was near and it was the work of a moment to snatch the bag, but in the scuffle the old man, slipping into the pit, was killed. When it became known, the village elders offered the youth a knife or a length of rope and told him they didn't wish to see him again. He chose the rope and, like Judas, "went away and hanged himself". There is a peculiarity amongst the Miao which has always been distressing to their friends. It is their tendency readily to commit suicide, it is said, a not uncommon feature amongst aboriginals. Such instances as the following are by no means exceptional: A boy and a girl who were very much attached to each other and forbidden by their parents to marry, hanged themselves with a single piece of rope. A little schoolgirl at Stone-Gateway who had been reproved by her teacher slipped

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762 quietly out of the room and, going down the hill, took her own life. A woman, who lived not far from us, one evening committed suicide because she had burnt the food she was cooking for her children.

After Pollard's death there was a recrudescence of drunkenness, immorality and superstition; but we must not be surprised at this. In England, after centuries of Christianity we are still faced with an appalling drink problem, an urgent sex question, and a spiritualist society. This is closely allied to necromancy. "Wine is a mocker" and "strong drink a brawler", whether in England or in China, and all over the world the teaching of Proverbs is terrifyingly true: "On account of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread." The dense darkness was not, and could not be dispersed in eleven years, but there is no need to paint the shadows too black; the high lights are too fascinating. Throughout the province there was civil war and brigandage and political unrest, whilst amongst our Miao were bad cases of backsliding. Throughout scores of villages, however, the habit of prayer and pure living and the study of God's loved word was being acquired. The year 1917 was a memorable date, as it was during this year that the British and Foreign Bible Society printed and published in the Flowery Miao language, the whole of the New Testament. The work of translation had been done by Sam Pollard and the Rev. A. G. Nicholls of the China Inland Mission, but with James Yang, Pollard's gifted amanuensis,

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

The Ch'uan Miao have no so-called doctors but there are some people who are supposed to know more about healing than others. They use mutton, pork, fish, the flesh of hawks or dogs, grasses, roots, bones of leopards, tigers and bears, and fossil bones and teeth. Neolithic stone axes, when found, are ground to powder and used as medicine. Fish is used to heal many diseases, pork to heal colds, dog meat to heal rheumatism, mutton to heal stomach trouble, and there is a kind of grass that is supposed to heal broken bones. This grass is wrapped around the broken limb which is bound up tightly until the bone has grown together. A few of these medicines have healing power, but others are positively harmful.

All diseases are supposed to be caused by demons. These creatures are the unhappy souls of human beings, animals and some inanimate things such as mountains and stones. The soul of a human being may become a demon if there are no descendants to provide for its needs or if the descendants are unfilial, do not show due reverence, and do not provide through offerings the necessary food, money, clothing, etc. Naturally the way to heal a disease is to get rid of the demon that is causing it and this is the work of the *tuan kung*. He knows how to find out what demon is causing the trouble and by means of charms, ceremonies and incantations he exorcises the demon and heals the disease. Of course he is paid for his services.

With such meager and inadequate provision for the healing of the sick it is not at all strange that the death-rate among the Ch'uan Miao is very high. *A Ch'uan Miao friend told me* that eleven children had been born to him and that only two were still living, both of whom were less than ten years old.[13] He said that he believed that many deaths were caused by the use of the wrong medicines. It is evident that if the birth-rate were not correspondingly high the Ch'uan Miao would gradually disappear. Malaria, typhoid, and tuberculosis probably cause more deaths than other diseases.

A great many Ch'uan Miao women commit suicide, and it seems almost fashionable for them to take their own lives. The reasons are: first, that the husband and the husband's parents mistreat the wife; second, that her husband is unfaithful; and third, that she is grieved because of the death of her children.

When a person dies, people are afraid as long as the corpse is in the house, because they believe that the soul of the dead person may do harm to the living.

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13. Since this was written, one of these two children and the father have died.

/469 cont./

115 His unconditional reliance on the information from the spirits
156 by way of the oracle is characteristic of him. We also discovered
622 that prior to our arrival he had asked the spirits what our secret
123 intentions were. The information must have been favorable
[787] for us, since he decided to obey us unconditionally. /470/ I can well imagine, however, that if the opposite had been the case, everything would have been other but pleasant.

"Tsin Tsai carefully cultivates his fields and in addition is an excellent smith who is even able to forge guns and to melt and work silver. He knows how to make paper as well as to castrate animals. His real passion is for the hunt. Finally, he
[756] also acts as shaman, questions the spirits, and offers sacrifices to
[757] the ancestors and spirits. He also, however, undoubtedly possesses medical knowledge, and the Meau come to him from afar in order to be treated by him. Without detriment to these activities, he discharges his duties as village chief and judge to the satisfaction of all."

● 762 Although the vitality of the Meau seems almost inexhaustible and they are very cheerful, suicides nevertheless occur. In three instances that I learned of, it was a matter of unhappily married women who had no chance of getting a divorce. In one case, a young man could not get along with his older brother who was acting as the head of the family.

53 The Meau are not especially good orators, but on the other hand are very talented lyrically as poets and singers.

177 In keeping with their great vitality, they are open to innovations if a thing does not conflict with their tradition, their religious prohibitions, or their experiences. They indeed cling tenaciously to their traditional attire, but, from what has been said, they may be regarded as quite adaptable. To be sure, Savina (1)

1. II, p. 188.

states: "During the course of his migration he (the Meau, note by Dr. B.) has seen among other peoples houses that were much more comfortable than his own. And yet it never occurs to him to build something similar." In my opinion, however, this does